

Comments on Article 74.7.3 of the Code (requirement for an express statement of the taxonomic purpose of a lectotype designation), including a proposal that it should be revoked

Article 74.7 of the Code reads: 'To be valid, a lectotype designation made after 1999 must . . . [74.7.3] contain an express statement of the taxonomic purpose of the designation'.

There was no requirement for such a statement in the previous (1985) edition of the Code, which prescribed (as does the current edition) that 'each designation . . . must have as its object the definition of the taxon'.

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As a practicing taxonomist I feel obliged to protest against the Article 74.7.3 that first appeared in the new edition of the Code. In my view, this Article is objectionable and unnecessary for two reasons:

1. It requires a justification of the obvious. It is true that there are some rare cases of very unsatisfactory lectotype designations (e.g., specimens unsuitable for identification purposes are designated when better specimens are present; or a lectotype is selected from a mixed series, changing the established species concept or resulting in some other negative nomenclatural impact). Unfortunately we have no protection mechanism against unqualified work, and the formal statement required by the new Code adds nothing to the quality of lectotype designations. There is no need to justify in words the usual process of typification, the importance of which is clearly stated in Article 61.1. It is also inconsistent to require such a statement for lectotype designations when no similar provision is made for holotype designations.

2. Since every designation of a lectotype has to be individual (Article 74.3), the provision requires multiple repetitions when more than one lectotype is being designated in a paper. For example, I am preparing a large paper on *Tachysphex* wasps in which some 40 lectotypes are designated. Article 74.7.3 forces me to repeat 40 times the formula 'here designated in order to ensure the name's proper and consistent application'. I find this to be ridiculous.

I would strongly recommend that this ill-conceived innovation in the Code be deleted as soon as possible.

(2) Subsequently Dr Pulawski informed the Commission Secretariat that he had circulated his letter to more than 200 zoologists worldwide, and copies of it, with small individual variations, have been received from C. van Achterberg (*Leiden, The Netherlands*), H. Dollfuss (*Mank, Austria*), F. Gusenleitner and J. Gusenleitner (*Linz, Austria*), J. Klimaszewski (*Sainte-Foy, Québec, Canada*), M. Kuhlmann (*Münster, Germany*), J. Leclercq (*Liège, Belgium*), A.S. Menke (*Bisbee, Arizona, U.S.A.*), M. Ohl (*Berlin, Germany*) and M. Schwarz (*Ansfelden, Austria*). Support for Dr Pulawski's letter has also been received from C.L. Bellamy (*Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.*), P. Dessart (*Bruxelles, Belgium*), P.K.L. Ng (*Singapore*), J.S. Noyes (*London, U.K.*) and F. Ronquist (*Uppsala, Sweden*).